Institute of Health (NIH), USA. The studies in respect of the immunogenicity and toxicity *vis-a-vis* the HIV vaccine appropriate for the Indian strain of HIV-I are being pursued at the Therion Biologies, USA where an Indian Scientist has been associated with developing the candidate vaccine (construct). The Phase-I clinical trials of MVA based HIV-I sub-type-C may start after these studies are completed.

As when the immunogenicity and toxicity studies in respect of the vaccine being developed are completed, and the data is available, the office of the Drug Controller General of India would be approached for permission to import the vaccine and to conduct Phase-I trials on humans in India.

Reimbursement of medical claims

*219. SHRI R.S. GAVAI:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of medical reimbursement claims of the Government employees and pensioners under the CGHS pertaining to the last financial year are pending;

(b) the number of claims and the amount unpaid, State-wise;

(c) by when these claims would be settled;

(d) the minimum time taken by Government to settle the claims;

(e) whether Government propose to modify or hasten the process of reimbursement; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (f) No, Sir. CGHS only deals with the individual medical reimbursement claims of pensioners and all the individual reimbursement claims received in the CGHS during 2002-2003 have been disposed of by CGHS except 125 medical claims in CGHS, Chandigarh and 11 claims in the Headquarters which have been

referred to the Headquarters from other cities. The pending claims would be settled as soon as the relevant clarifications/documents relating to the cases become available. These figures do not include those cases where the admissible amount has been paid to the beneficiaries but the beneficiaries have asked for reimbursement of additional amount over and above the approved rates. As regards serving employees, the concerned Ministry/Department settles the individual medical reimbursement claims. Therefore, the CGHS does not have any information/records regarding reimbursement bills of serving employees.

It takes about 30 to 45 days to settle the medical claims of CGHS beneficiaries depending upon the availability of funds and subject to the documents in the reimbursement claims found to be in order.

The system of reimbursement claims has already been decentralized and the Zonal Additional Directors of CGHS have been given powers to settle the claims upto Rs. 2.00 lakh per claim at their level so that the pensioner beneficiaries can get the reimbursement claims expeditiously. Similarly, in the case of serving employees, the Head of Departments (HoD) have been delegated powers upto Rs. 2.00 lakh per claim.

Mysterious illness affecting children

*220. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that experts are clueless on the mysterious illness that has killed 87 children in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the efforts made by Government to investigate the cause of the illness;

(c) the details of other States affected by this disease; and

(d) the assistance provided to affected States?